

also is able to work extra cleaning jobs at some of Environmental Services' other contract sites.

The Resource Center honored Ms. Uber as part of its observance of October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Ms. Uber has overcome many odds to set herself apart and achieve great things, that is why, Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor her today.

THE PENSION PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 31, 2006

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, pension plans are today underfunded in this country by \$450 billion—up over 1,000 percent since 2000—and the agency that insures these pension plans, the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, is \$23 billion in debt, facing billions more in possible claims from companies such as Delta Airlines, Delphi, and Northwest Airlines.

Why? Well, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle give the same excuse every time: September 11. We are at war. Times are tough. But during that same time, corporate profits have risen an astonishing 50 percent and CEO compensation has grown even faster. Indeed, USA Today reports that 300 executives responsible for more than three-quarters of a trillion dollars in corporate losses since 2000 were rewarded with salary, bonuses and stock options totaling a staggering \$12 billion—\$8 million per year.

Times are not so tough for them—and little wonder. As a confidential letter sent to the SEC shows, CEO compensation at many publicly traded companies bears no relation to company performance. But as we all know, pensions do.

And when we talk about pensions and why reform is so badly needed, we should remember who it is that depend on them most—we are talking about people who have worked all their lives and are looking to enjoy their later years with some measure of financial security. Most of the 34 million Americans who are covered by a traditional pension that provides a guaranteed monthly benefit in retirement are not young adults starting out, with their whole careers in front of them—people who can change course at a moment's notice. These are very often seniors, people who have raised families; again, people who have worked their entire lives and paid not only their taxes but their dues to society with the expectation that what they have invested will be returned to them. The least we can do as their elected representatives is tell them that we will ensure that the Government does its part to guarantee that their employers will honor their end of this bargain.

That should be the bedrock principle on which this legislation is predicated, but it is not. H.R. 2830 fails to protect older and longer-service workers that are involved in cash balance pension plan conversions. It does not prevent employers from giving the same conflicted financial advice to their workers that gave us Enron and WorldCom. And perhaps most disturbingly, it fails to stop companies from dumping billions of dollars of unfunded pension obligations onto the PBGC by

declaring bankruptcy at the expense of taxpayers and employees.

And let's be clear, that is very much by design. The goal of this Republican majority from the beginning with pension reform these last few years has been the same—relieving companies from their obligations to employees, providing an out to the point where we would have no choice but to switch from a strong pension system to one that leaves retirees in a much more tentative, less secure financial state. And with Republicans in charge these last 4 years, we have almost reached that point—but not quite yet.

But this is not the direction we want to take as a country. And so, I urge my colleagues to make a statement with this vote that says companies do have obligations their workers—that says reforming our pension system is possible but only if we ask employees and employers alike to share in the benefits and the sacrifice. We can do better than this bill and I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

TRIBUTE TO CPT MICHAEL GONSMAN

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 31, 2006

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor CPT Michael Gonsman of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. Captain Gonsman of Altoona, PA, served in Beiji, Iraq for 11 months. In addition to serving our country on the streets of Iraq, Captain Gonsman serves his home community as a member of the Duncansville Volunteer Fire Department.

Captain Gonsman has dedicated 19 years to the fire department, serving as a truck foreman and a line officer. His fellow firefighters were like family to him, and while it was difficult for him to leave them and his wife and three children, he courageously moved forward to serve his country.

His fellow firefighters have said that he has always been dedicated to serving his country, and he has done just that. Captain Gonsman, who served as company commander, bravely led his soldiers to help the people of Iraq. He loved serving, and felt that the local people appreciated their presence.

Mr. Speaker, Captain Gonsman's fire department chief regarded him as a person who worked to better himself while helping others, and was willing to do anything he can for people in need. Through his service in Iraq and on the Duncansville Volunteer Fire Department, he has proven that he is still that way today. The citizens of Duncansville and I would like to thank Captain Gonsman for his service and dedication to his country and community.

TRIBUTE TO RADM MICHAEL G. MATHIS

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 31, 2006

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Rear Admiral Michael G.

Mathis, United States Navy, for his more than 30 years of active duty service to our country. Admiral Mathis most recently served as the deputy commander for Test and Evaluation at the Naval Sea Systems Command and he retired on January 26, 2006.

For over two decades, Admiral Mathis shaped the Navy's strategic planning of surface ship combat systems, from electronic warfare and tactical data systems to advanced radars and several generations of surface-to-air missiles. He is the rare combination of leadership at sea, exceptional engineering and scientific accomplishments, and success as a program executive and program manager. Serving tirelessly as a Navy and Joint leader, including as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Chief Engineer, Admiral Mathis kept the spotlight on the RDT&E required to meet the Department of Defense's current and future needs.

In his many years as the leader of the Surface Navy's acquisition professionals, as well as the Navy's senior expert in advanced and future weapons systems, Admiral Mathis instilled pride in generations of naval officers and civilian engineers. A strong proponent of technical proficiency in naval officers, he promoted the Navy's advanced science and engineering degree programs for junior officers.

Admiral Mathis's inspirational leadership and management of the 22,000 men and women of the Naval Surface Warfare Systems Command during wartime has directly contributed to the tremendous record of success in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, including the fielding of thermobaric weapons and innovative Force Protection advances developed in his warfare center laboratories. He put the weapons and tools in the hands of the warfighters when they were needed. Most recently, his talents and dedication to our warfighters were further put to use by our country as he served in the Joint Staff as Deputy Director, J-8 for Force Protection.

Throughout his career, the Navy's leadership selected Admiral Mathis for a series of key positions to mold the technical direction of the Navy's Theatre Missile Defense program. His foresight, vision, and management decisions led to the development and continuing success of missile defense programs vital to our Nation's defense. Key among his assignments was as the Director, Joint Theater Air and Missile Defense Organization, where he was responsible to the Chairman and Secretary of Defense for evaluating systems and emerging technologies to determine the optimum mix of surveillance, fire control systems, and the associated battle management system to counter aircraft, cruise missile and ballistic missile threats to our Nation.

More than just a leader providing the technical punch for the global war on terror, Admiral Mathis has focused on maintaining our Nation's technological edge in future weapons systems. He is the senior advocate and leader for the RDT&E in laser and directed energy weapons, inspiring industry and government engineers to solve engineering challenges and ensuring our next generation of warfighters has the weapons needed to win. He has championed the need for battle force, joint, and coalition interoperability and warfighting capabilities, serving as the Single Integrated Air Picture System Engineer for